

**House of Representatives
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Committee Meeting Schedule - Interim 2004**

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	COMMITTEE	SUBJECT	TYPE
September 20-21	TBA	Olympia	Full Committee	1. Discharge permit fees. 2. Sustainable yield calculation. 3. Tax incentives for achieving water quality objectives. 4. Water rights confirmation. 5. WSU's state-supported agricultural research projects.	Work Session
September 22	1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Olympia	Agriculture & Natural Resources (Joint with Judiciary)	Water Court	Work Session/ Public Hearing
December 2-3	TBA	Olympia	Full Committee	Work Session/Public Hearing: 1. Administration of water resource programs. 2. Water Court. Work Session: 1. GIS as a natural resource tool. 2. Reclaimed water. 3. Setting instream flows.	Work Session/ Public Hearing

Project Title: Discharge Permit Fees

Project Goal:

Study and monitor the development of the Department of Ecology's (DOE's) permit fee rule.

Project Description:

The Committee will study and monitor the DOE's amendment of the wastewater discharge permit fees rule (Chapter 173-224 WAC) for state waste discharge and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge permits issued by the DOE. The Committee will consider changes in the permit fee rule related to legislation enacted during the 2004 session (ESSB 6415) addressing construction and industrial general storm water discharge permits and with respect to the DOE's development of municipal separate storm sewer system general discharge permits pursuant to federal Clean Water Act requirements. The Committee also will consider the relationship of permit fees and discharge permit program costs.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session: part of one meeting

Completion Date: September 2004

Staff Assigned: Caroleen Dineen

Project Title: Sustainable Yield Calculation

Project Goal:

Examine the impact of the final adoption by the Board of Natural Resources of a sustainable timber harvest level on future opportunities for the state.

Project Description:

The Department of Natural Resources is responsible for managing state-owned forest lands on a sustained yield basis, meaning that state forests must be managed in a manner that provides a continuing harvest level without any prolonged curtailments or cessation of harvests. To satisfy this requirement, a sustainable yield harvest level is periodically adopted by the Board of Natural Resources. The harvest level represents the volume of timber scheduled for sale from state-owned lands during the upcoming planning decade. The Board is scheduled to adopt a new final sustainable harvest level during the summer of 2004.

The Committee will review the new sustainable harvest level that the Board of Natural Resources is scheduled to adopt. The Committee also will consider how the new harvest level could impact future legislative discussions on issues such as those dealing with third party certification (as initially raised by HB 2733 and HB 2753 in 2004) as well as other options for state forest management, such as future habitat conservation plans and other management agreements.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session: part of one meeting

Completion Date: December 15, 2004

Staff Assigned: Jason Callahan

Project Title: Tax Incentives for Achieving Water Quality Objectives

Project Goal:

Consider whether state tax laws may be used to create incentives for achieving water quality objectives.

Project Description:

The Committee will hold a work session to consider use of tax laws to create incentives for achieving water quality goals. The Committee will review whether tax policies and/or incentives may encourage businesses to comprehensively address water quality impacts, increase effectiveness of funds spent to comply with water quality requirements, and enhance development of creative solutions to water quality problems.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session: part of one meeting

Completion Date: September 2004

Staff Assigned: Caroleen Dineen

Project Title: Water Rights Confirmation

Project Goal:

Examine proposals for confirming the quantity of water that may be used under an existing water right.

Project Description:

Legislation introduced at the request of the Governor, SB 6734, included provisions for confirming the quantity of water that may be used under an existing water right. The bill remained in the Senate policy committee at the end of the 2004 Regular Session.

The Committee will examine any proposals for altering the process outlined in SB 6734 or for providing an alternative confirmation process that may have been developed by groups during the legislative interim period.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session: part of one meeting

Completion Date: September 2004

Staff Assigned: Ken Hirst

Project Title: Washington State University's State-Funded Agricultural Research Projects

Project Goal:

Examine the type of agricultural research projects Washington State University (WSU) proposes to support with state funds during the 2005-07 biennium.

Project Description:

The vast majority of the state research funds appropriated to WSU are not dedicated by provisos; in this regard, their use is discretionary. Section 604(8) of the supplemental operating budget (ESHB 2459) requires WSU to present reports to the fiscal committees of the Legislature detailing the use of state research funds for the current biennium.

The Committee will examine the agricultural research projects that WSU proposes to support with state funding during the 2005-07 biennium in the budget it submits to the Governor.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session: part of one meeting

Completion Date: September 2004

Staff Assigned: Ken Hirst & Susan Howson

Project Title: Water Court

Project Goal:

Study whether the state should create a specialized water court system and review legislative proposals regarding establishment of this system.

Project Description:

The Committee, as a joint project with the Judiciary Committee, will study whether the state should create a specialized water court system for general adjudications and resolution of water rights disputes. The Committee will review the January 2004 report of the Water Disputes Task Force, which recommended the creation of a water court, and legislation introduced during the 2004 session to create the new court system (i.e., HB 3140, HJR 4219, SB 6674, SJR 8224, and SSJR 8225). The Committee also will monitor the activities and review the recommendations of the Board for Judicial Administration's ad hoc committee, which is being created to develop a formal judicial branch position on the creation of a water court system.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session/Public Hearing: one full meeting in September and part of one meeting in December

Completion Date: December 2004

Staff Assigned: Caroleen Dineen and Ken Hirst (with Judiciary Committee staff)

Project Title: Administration of Water Resource Programs

Project Goal:

Examine the recommendations of the Water Resources Administration and Funding Task Force.

Project Description:

Section 301(20) of the supplemental operating budget (ESHB 2459) provides funding to the DOE to convene a Water Resources Administration and Funding Task Force to develop proposals for the state's water resource programs and to recommend several options for funding the programs.

The Committee will examine the recommendations of the Task Force.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session/Public Hearing: part of one meeting.

Completion Date: December 2004

Staff Assigned: Ken Hirst and Caroleen Dineen.

Project Title: GIS as a Natural Resource Tool

Project Goal:

Examine the use of geographic information systems (GIS) in supporting natural resource projects and decision-making.

Project Description:

The Committee will examine the implementation of Sections 301(14)(b) and 303(5) of the supplemental operating budget (ESHB 2459), which:

- provide funding with which the Department of Ecology is to work with counties with local GIS to evaluate systems for determining existing water rights and to map existing water rights and document current ownership; and
- provide funding to the Inter Agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation to implement a state-wide biodiversity conservation program.

The Committee also will examine the use of GIS by the Department of Natural Resources as part of its management and planning operations.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session: part of one meeting

Completion Date: December 2004

Staff Assigned: Ken Hirst, Jason Callahan & Caroleen Dineen

Project Title: Reclaimed Water

Project Goal:

Review current law and projects and study potential legislative issues and/or proposals.

Project Description:

The Committee will examine current state statutes and regulations governing reclaimed water and consider how the use of reclaimed water may be promoted throughout the state. The Committee will study the development and implementation of reclaimed water projects throughout the state, including projects for which the Legislature has provided or is currently providing state funding (e.g., in the supplemental capital budget, ESHB 2573). The Committee also will study issues related to development of reclaimed water projects and use of reclaimed water. The Committee will consider whether any statutory or regulatory changes are necessary to facilitate either the development of these projects or the use of reclaimed water in the state. The Committee will tour one reclaimed water project in Ephrata.

Number & Type of Meetings: Committee tour and Committee work session (part of one meeting).

Completion Date: December 2004

Staff Assigned: Caroleen Dineen, Ken Hirst, Jason Callahan, Charlie Gavigan

Project Title: Setting Instream Flows

Project Goal:

Examine the activities of the Department of Ecology (DOE) in setting instream flow requirements in the state.

Project Description:

An instream flow requirement set by rule by the DOE is treated by statute as a water right. Its date of priority (or seniority) is the date the instream flow requirement is established. An instream flow established by rule may be protected from impairment caused by the use of more junior water rights or by the effects of the transfer or change of an existing junior or senior water right.

Section 301(14)(a) of the supplemental operating budget (ESHB 2459) provides funding to the DOE that is dedicated to establishing instream flow requirements by rule for the main stem rivers and their key tributaries in the state. In areas where flows are not being set as part of locally initiated watershed planning, the DOE is to create a process for public involvement in setting these flows that is similar to that in the watershed planning process.

The Committee will examine the activities and progress of the DOE in setting those instream flow requirements.

Number & Type of Meetings: Work Session/Public Hearing: part of one meeting.

Completion Date: December 2004

Staff Assigned: Ken Hirst & Caroleen Dineen.
